GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:259
ANSWERED ON:03.12.2007
PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF FOODGRAINS
Reddy Shri Magunta Sreenivasulu

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the decline in per-capita consumption of cereals particularly coarse cereals has worsened the nutritional status of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to promote consumption of coarse cereals in the country for improving the nutritional status;

(c) whether the food security has been achieved at the national level particularly with reference to poor in the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the steps being taken to strengthen food security in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a), (b), (c), (d) & (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (e) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 259 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 03.12.2007 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a) & (b): As per 61st round of National Sample Survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation, between 1993-94 and 2004-05, per capita per month consumption of cereals including coarse cereals, has declined from 13.4 kg to 12.1 kg in rural India and from 10.6 kg to 9.9 kg in urban India. Decline in consumption of cereals may affect nutritional status of people, unless the diet is compensated with consumption of vegetables, fruits and pulses. However, specific details about adverse effects of reduced cereal consumption on nutritional status of people are not available.

Food & Nutrition Board of the Ministry of Women & Child Development carries out work through its 43 Field Units located in 29 States and UTs for generating nutritional awareness (including nutritional importance of coarse grains) among public.

(c), (d) & (e): Yes, Sir. At the national level, for ensuring food security in the country, Government implements Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The TPDS is focused on below poverty line families, including the poorest of the poor (Antyodaya Anna Yojana) families. For 6.52 crore BPL families, the Govt. allocates to States and Union Territories foodgrains @ 35 kg per family per month. The Govt. also allocates foodgrains under TPDS for Above Poverty Line (APL) families depending upon their availability in the Central Pool and by linking them with offtake during previous years.

A number of welfare schemes such as Mid-day Meal Scheme, Wheat Based Nutrition Programme (ICDS), National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Nutritional Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG), etc. are implemented by different Ministries of the Government. Allocations of foodgrains are made for them by the Deptt. of Food & Public Distribution. For chronically food scarce areas, Govt. also implements Village Grain Banks (VGB) Scheme under which foodgrains are allocated to States and Union Territories free of cost, as one time grant and funds are provided for setting up and running of the VGBs.

In addition, the Govt. keeps a continuous watch on prices of food articles. To keep their prices affordable, the Govt. also releases foodgrains for sale in the open market to augment their supplies.

To meet the emergencies and unforeseen situations of food scarcity, the Govt. maintains minimum buffer stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool. The Govt. also allocates foodgrains as a part of relief measures in case of natural calamities. In case requirements of stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool are not met from domestic procurement, the Government also imports foodgrains.